

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/19/2024 7:34:52 AM

First name: John

Last name: Geiger

Organization:

Title:

Comments: * Immediately stop cutting old-growth in the Daniel Boone National Forest.?

* Any management in old-growth forests, including prescribed fire and understory management, should be the minimum necessary to support existing and future old-growth structure and function as appropriate for the community type.?

* Eliminate exceptions in the plan that allow forest managers discretion to convert old-growth to young forests, or to otherwise degrade or diminish forests' old-growth condition.

* Recognize the importance of old-growth across all forest types, including disturbance-mediated forest communities like upland and ?fire-adapted oak forests and woodlands.?

* Ensure that the inventory and identification of old-growth is scientifically sound. Make the process of identifying old-growth forests transparent, consistent, and open to public input. Involve researchers, ecologists, and other outside experts in the identification and inventory process.?

* Require that mature forests be managed for future old-growth in a manner that ensures a variety of patch sizes, wide distribution, and good connectivity across the Daniel Boone National Forest, improving on the deficiencies in the current Forest Plan.

* Develop a plan for a network of future old-growth forests through an open, participatory, and scientifically sound process.

* Eliminate exceptions and end all logging of old-growth trees (except in rare cases for public safety and indigenous cultural uses), including in the Tongass National Forest.

* End logging in moist and infrequent fire old-growth stands. Younger trees in old-growth stands that burn on longer fire cycles do not need to be removed for ecosystem restoration or wildfire mitigation.

* Protect old-growth trees in cases when logging may be necessary in frequent fire forests. Young trees in fire suppressed old-growth stands may need to be removed, but old-growth trees should be left standing.

* Prohibit sending old-growth trees to the timber mills. The economic incentive for logging old-growth must be removed. If the logged tree cannot be sold or exchanged, it will likely prevent all but truly rare removals of old-growth trees.

* Set the stage for durable protections for mature trees and stands. This is paramount to the future of old-growth. If we do not also protect mature trees, we will fail to recover old-growth forests across the country. Mature trees will grow into old trees over the next several decades and as many of them as possible must remain standing.

* Be consistent with the need to address wildfire. Protecting older trees and forests can increase forest resilience to wildfires, and combat climate-change related impacts such as flooding and drought. Protecting our oldest trees supports the Department of Agriculture's Wildfire Crisis Strategy.